



NO. 9

HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR



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Welcome to our ninth issue. As promised, we have many special contributions in this memorial tribute to **SAM KINGSTON**, our founder and former editor/publisher. Many original EC artists have been kind enough to contribute to this issue. **Johnny Craig** created the wonderful oil painting which graces our wrap-around cover. **Jack Kamen** sent us another of his wonderful *"Kamen Babes".* **Al Feldstein** allowed us to print a copy of the painting which he created for the Gaines family. **Al Williamson** sent us an unpublished piece that will give you nightmares. **Kelly Freas** couldn't help himself, and created a zany parody of the Craig cover painting. There are many other great artists featured within these pages. I would like to thank Mike Vosburg, Richard Corben, Ken Hooper, Hal Robins, Jay Lynch, Bob X, Brandon McKinney, Chance Fivash, XNO, Cyril Jordan and Cecil Sutton for contributing their artistic abilities to **HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR.**

In addition, we also have some well written articles that should prove to enlighten and entertain our readers. Roger Hill's piece features all fourteen images created by **Graham Ingels**, during his all too short return to horror imagery. **Marie Severin** reminisces about her days working at the EC offices. The Old Witek's article on **Reed Crandall** is another piece worth reading. I dug deep into my art collection and found some early unpublished work by **Basil Wolverton** which I am sure you will enjoy. So take your time and enjoy every page.

BILL LEACH
Editor/Publisher

Bill Leach 2005

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IN MEMORY OF SAM KINGSTON, A TALENTED AND DEVOTED FAN OF EC HORROR COMICS...



...FROM HIS APPRECIATIVE FAN,
AL FELDSTEIN

"WILLIAM M. GAINES AND FRIENDS"
copyright 1996 BY AL FELDSTEIN


To: Sam KINGSTON
A GOOD MAN-WITH
EXCELLENT TASTES AND
INTELLECTUAL ABILITIES.
Jack Karnen
KARNEN '96

AAHHH EC!!!

by Sam Kingston

Timeless. Terrible. Twisted. And definitely Tops. EC comics were and are thee comics. I will never forget picking up my first EC comic book. It happened to be a Russ Cochran reprint of Haunt of Fear #18! The stunning Graham Ingels artwork did not really catch my attention. But the words "Tales From The Crypt Presents" did!! I had seen the television series and enjoyed the stories because of the strong "twist" endings. When I saw that comic I had no idea I was in for the obsession of my life!! After reading that first Haunt, I immediately ordered the hardback set of Crypt as well as all the reprints I could get my hands on. The main reason I enjoyed the EC line was their horror titles (still my favorite) but I soon found the same style of entertaining and thought provoking stories in their other "muck mags" as well! It still amazes me to think that these comics are over forty years old!!

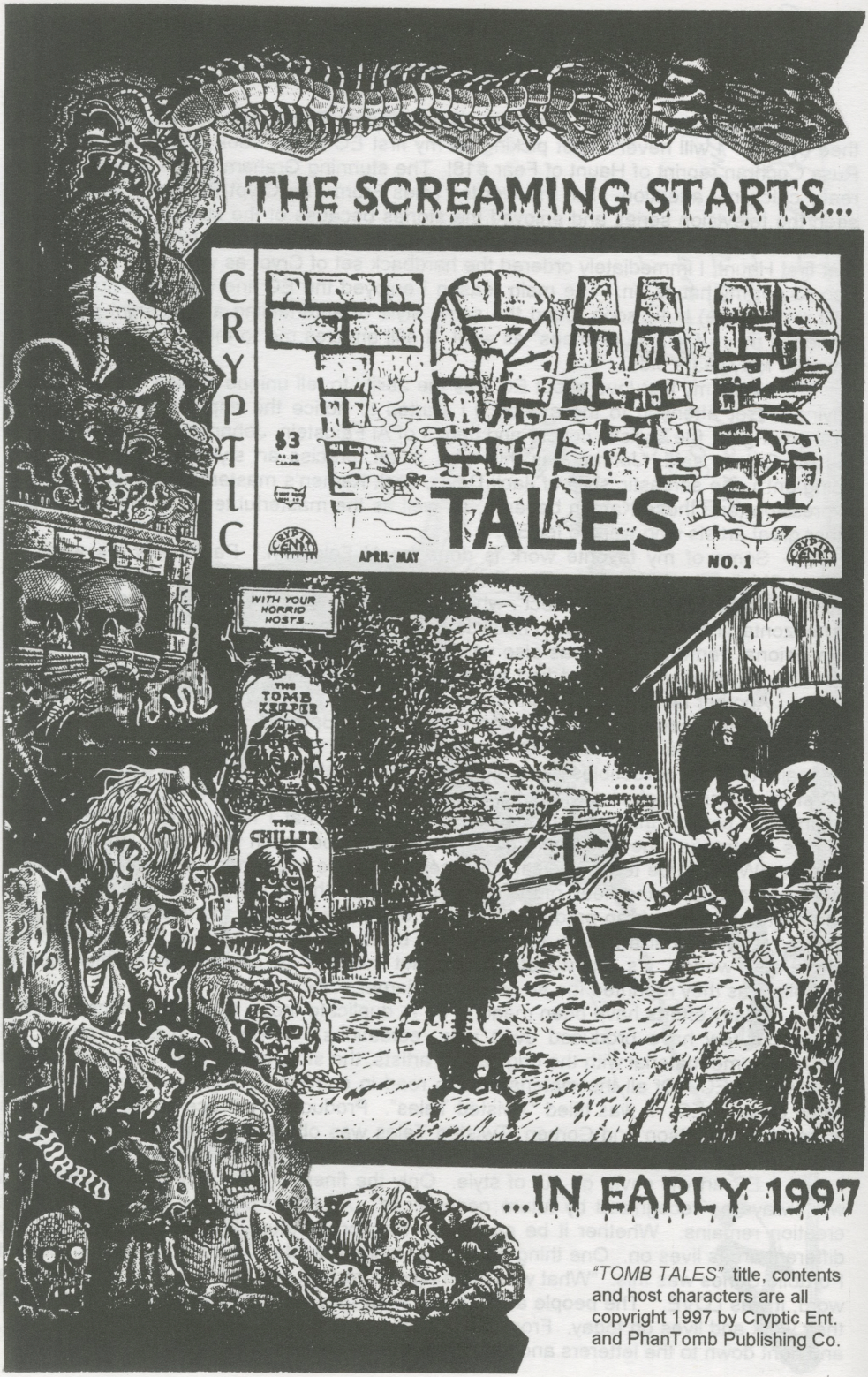
While my first love about EC was the ability to tell unique stories, I soon started paying closer attention to the artwork. I started to notice the dripping, Gothic style of Graham Ingels, the stylistic covers and pages of Al Feldstein, Johnny Craig's lovely work, (as Bill Gaines said, "Johnny has this nice, clean, precise art style with horrible things going on!"), the sarcastic style of Jack Davis, Jack Kamen's masterful technique of facial expression (and those Kamen babes!!), as well as the masterful techniques of the many other great artists who worked for EC.

Some of my favorite work is done by Al Feldstein. Particularly his work on "Ghost Ship", "The Thing From The Grave" and the cover of Crypt #24. Al had a unique technique that I call "the 3-D effect": which I have enjoyed a great deal. Through his use of horizontal line work, he created many images that appeared to have depth within a one dimensional framework. Al was also very talented at writing and editing. I often wonder what he might have produced had he decided to keep drawing rather than writing and editing. Another favorite is Graham Ingels, a gothic master!!! What an artist!! The story that immediately comes to mind is "Horror We? How's Bayou?"

I have been collecting EC comics for nearly 5 years now and have accumulated the majority of the collectibles available from both the television series as well as the "true EC stuff". While original art is generally out of my price range, I have been picking up original EC comics through various comic dealers. What I have found in the original comics is strange...the tones and coloring seems to be much more enjoyable than the reprints. While some technological advancements have been made in coloring and ink, I think a great deal of the "feel" of the originals is lost in the reprint series. I think the black and white series Cochran produced is a very enjoyable medium, particularly his Portfolio Series. The original art really stands out in black and white. It lets the reader into a whole new world. It's unfortunate he did not continue to produce these high quality portfolios, as they reprinted the art on a much larger scale.

Many efforts have been made to try to duplicate these fabulous comics from the fifties, but few have produced even pale recreations. While the Warren comics did produce some material with the original EC artists, the story ideas rarely compared to the creativity of EC. Of all the material I have read in comics, only one was produced that came close to EC. It was titled "Twisted Tales". Produced by Bruce Jones with various artists like Wrightson and Corben, Twisted Tales was obviously a direct imitation of EC Comics. It actually produced some very enjoyable material in the EC vein.

EC art will never go out of style. Only the finest creations remain timeless and will always be recognized by future generations. As times change, truly gifted artistic creation remains. Whether it be music, painting or literature, the true creativity of the different areas lives on. One thing that Russ Cochran wrote in the introduction of his first Portfolio Series was this: "What was the magic ingredient that made EC so special? In a word, it was LOVE." The people at EC loved what they were doing and it shines through their work and lives on today. From the publisher and editors, the writers and the artists, and right down to the letterers and colorists, the love shines through!!!



"TOMB TALES" title, contents and host characters are all copyright 1997 by Cryptic Ent. and PhanTomb Publishing Co.



HBO's Tales From The Crypt cover artist Mike Vosburg conjured up this contrast between beauty and horror especially for this issue.

THE COCHRAN EC PRE TREND REPRINTS

by David R. Burlington

Gemstone Publishing (formerly known to all as Russ Cochran Publishers) has recently begun the final phase of their ambitious **Complete EC Library** with the publication of EC's Pre-Trend crime comics, Crime Patrol and War Against Crime! (the actual title did have an exclamation point in it). In this part we will concentrate on EC's Pre-Trend crime yarns, which began years before the much more famous Crime Suspenstories. It is worth noting that both the production values and overall look of this slipcased set are simply beautiful.

Cochran has grouped these reprints into four volumes: two for War Against Crime (issues 1 through 11; Spring 1948 through Feb.-Mar. 1950) and two for Crime Patrol (issues 7 through 16; Summer 1948 through Feb.-Mar. 1950).

Johnny Craig did all the covers for Crime Patrol. Many of the series' stories are illustrated by Craig, Feldstein, and Ingels, along with numerous other nearly anonymous toilers who did not make the "cut" to the New Trend. The art of Feldstein and Craig is very similar to their later EC work, but Ingels' is significantly different. His development is astonishing.

The cover of Crime Patrol #15 could just as well be a Tales From the Crypt cover with only a logo change. One realizes that Gaines, Feldstein, and Craig "got it right" almost at once. This issue also sees the first appearance of the Crypt Keeper, who is much less outlandish and punning here than in his later incarnation. The first tale, entitled "Return From the Grave", is illustrated by Feldstein. Oddly, it does not lead off the issue but is the book's windup. Was Gaines playing it safe in case horror didn't sell? A straight, albeit exquisitely illustrated, Craig crime story is the leadoff here. Issue 15 also features an interesting Feldstein/Craig art collaboration in "The Swindle by Flame". Crime Patrol #16 has exactly the look and ambiance of 15 and by issue 17 the name change to The Crypt of Terror was a fait accompli.

In War Against Crime, we again see Johnny Craig handling all the cover chores. Most of the art is by Craig, Ingels, Harrison, Wood, Feldstein, John Alton, Stan Asch, and a couple others. War Against Crime follows the same format as Crime Patrol with essentially straight crime stories and attempts at film noirish depictions of petty criminal existence. Unfortunately, the hackneyed "crime does not pay" message is found here but is not troweled on with quite the obviousness of other crime comics. While the writing and art are above the typical comic book standards of the day (and that certainly is not saying much), it is plain that EC had yet to hit its stride. As in its sister publication, the first straight horror issue of War Against Crime is its penultimate one. The first Vault Keeper tale, also illustrated by Feldstein, is "Buried Alive" in issue 10. In its look, it is identical to Feldstein's Crypt Keeper tale over in Crime Patrol. However, perhaps Gaines was a little more sanguine about horror comics' chances because "Buried Alive" leads off issue 10. Revealingly, the upper left sidebar blurb was changed from "true crime" to "horror" by issue 11, the last War Against Crime published before the title change to the Vault of Horror in the April-May 1950 issue.

Readers expecting "state of the art" EC crime and horror will be dissatisfied by this Cochran set. However, those appreciating the evolution of

EC's script and art quality over time will be fascinated by these embryonic tales, precursors of great things to come.

Another genre popular in the late 1940's was romance comics. Indeed, their red hot popularity in that era soon led to a glut and an industry-wide shakeout. Again, Gaines was feeling his way in the comics business and decided to take a stab at romance in the form of Modern Love, a Moon, a Girl... Romance, and Saddle Romances. The latter two retained the numbering of, and were revamped titles of, Moon Girl and Saddle Justice. Volume one of this EC library set consists of Modern Love (issue 1 through 8; June-July 1949 through Aug.-Sept. 1950). Volume two includes all the issues of a Moon, a Girl... Romance (issue 9 through 12; Sept.-Oct. 1949 through Mar.-April 1950) and Saddle Romances (issues 9 through 11; Nov.-Dec. 1949 through Mar.-April 1950). Production values are again excellent, and the two volumes are slipcased.

The new titles were primarily hyped in overheated house ads. These advised readers that every issue contained "true love tales at their illustrated best", complete with "heart-rendering scenes, poignant drama, and blissful moments!" Most issues contained advice to the lovelorn columns purportedly authored by "Adrienne" and "Amy". Of course, they were actually written by Bill and Al. The stories themselves seem hopelessly campy by today's standards but were pretty much par for the course for that era. The "troubled" and "defiant" teens depicted seem about as rebellious to us as missionaries or insurance salesmen.

The covers are either by Feldstein, Ingels, or the penciling/inking duo of Feldstein and Craig. Several artists were used who never made it into the New Trend lineup, including Walter T. Johnson and Bill Fraccio. Johnny Craig did very little work on these romance titles, but his unmistakable inks complement what is thought to be Fraccio's pencils in the story "A Woman's Treachery" in Modern Love #3. Feldstein and Craig collaborations are signed "F.C. Aljon", an amalgamation of their names and initials. Of interest to enthusiasts is the evolving collaboration of Harrison and Wood, who did many EC romance stories, some wonderful, some underwhelming. Their work culminated in the beautifully rendered "Playtime Cowgirl" in Saddle Romances #11.

A representative EC romance story is "Prison Widow" in a Moon, a Girl...Romance #12. Illustrated by Feldstein, it presents itself as a true story with only the names changed "to conceal the identities of those involved". Of course, the stories were simply made up by Feldstein and Gaines, with possible outside help by hired writers. In the story, Harry is behind bars but wife Flo is determined to remain faithful. However, Jerry enters Flo's life and heartache ensues since she is afraid to tell Jerry she's married to a jailbird. The "blissful moments" promised by the house ad seem thwarted when Harry makes parole. In the end, love does conquer all when Harry is conveniently killed in a gun battle with police, leaving Flo free to pitch woo with handsome, available Jerry.

The most famous EC romance tale is also the least typical. "The Love Story to end all Love Stories" is the last story in the final EC romance comic, Modern Love #8. A vicious satire, the story sends up Bill, Al, EC, and the entire comic book industry. Many rival comic book publishers are lampooned as an ever-escalating romance comic glut (art imitating life?) leads to the suicides of the entire EC management team, leaving only the office copy boy to pick up the pieces. Presumably he becomes rich riding the horror comic wave soon to

come. This outcome is alluded to in "Horror Beneath the Streets" in Haunt of Fear #17 (actually the third issue, Sept.-Oct. 1950). That story has Bill and Al discussing Modern Love by name, which they decide to drop in favor of horror comics after receiving sage publishing advice from none other than the Crypt Keeper, the Vault Keeper, and the Old Witch!

As in the crime set, these romance comics are not EC at its New Trend best. However, they are good fun and should be enjoyed as that and nothing more. The Feldstein and Ingels art is a nice bonus. The author recently called Gemstone Publishing and was told that the final selection in the Pre-Trend set, the western comics, is scheduled for publication in early 1997. All EC fans should be appreciative of Russ Cochran for making these rare and historic Pre-Trend comics available in permanent form.



Editor's note: As you can see, the Ghoulunatics still enjoy reading their old comics. Artist Ken Hooper lets us take a peek inside the EC Library. Wouldn't you love to get your hands on all those stacks of old EC comics? Many have tried...but have come to a untimely end. I myself prefer to keep my freedom (and my life). So I have steered clear of the Ghoulunatics Reading Room.

TO WHOEVER FINDS THIS...

by Rick Olson

It was turning out to be a rather normal, pleasant Sunday afternoon. The sudden turn of events came, as it always seems to do, from out of the clear blue. The prosaic ring of the telephone. A conversation with Bill Leach. The news he relayed. So much for the unfettered tranquillity which the rest of that particular day had seemed to promise. Instead, an evening spent in deep contemplation over the bittersweet nature of mortality.

I found myself remembering the day I learned that Wally Wood has passed away. It was 1982. I'd just finished reading Fantastic Four #242 and I was casually skimming over the Bullpen Bulletins page. There was a small paragraph written by Larry Hama, a friend of Wally's. The type was very tiny, printed over a color background. Barely legible, it read as follows:

The comics world lost one of its greatest innovators last month with the untimely passing of Wally Wood. His work was hilarious and terrifying; action-packed but solidly planted; amazingly child-like while maturely crafted. He brought us joy and wonder in four colors for a dime and the world will never see the likes of him again.

"Woody" had a youthful enthusiasm and genuinely generous nature- all trapped in a body that was aging too fast for him and pursued by the demons that nip at the heels of all who dare to defy the strictures of Never-Never Land.

Hopefully, there is a sylvan glade somewhere, where sleek, silver spaceships glide silently overhead, tentacled aliens lurk behind boulders muttering "spa-fon" and a cute little pip-squeak frolics with the nicest zaffig elfish ladies for an endless afternoon.

A chilling surge of emotion washed over my entire nervous system. Struggling against it I set the comic down, lost in a timeless daze. A world had just died. It was a death I experienced vicariously and its life seemed to flash before my eyes in that instant. I finally broke down and wept intensely for about a minute and then grudgingly pulled myself together again with surprising ease. It was another one of those days. With dependable irregularity mortality will come along to remind us of this inevitable presence.

There is one particular EC story to which I always seem to return. Drawn by Wally Wood, "The Precious Years" from Weird Science #19 is easily my favorite EC story.



It opens with the introduction of a man named Martin who lives in a future society where the human lifespan can be extended indefinitely through the use of periodic "rejuve-shots". Although he looks like a man of twenty-five, Martin is five hundred and fifty years old. He's gone through eleven wives. Romance and love have lost all meaning to Martin. And he is desperately bored with living. He asks himself, "What haven't you seen? What haven't you done? What can you do today that you haven't done a million times already?" He knows that if he stopped receiving the rejuve shots he would finally grow old and die. But he's afraid of a slow death such as this. He wants to die quickly. He challenges himself to plunge over the balcony and end it all but he knows he hasn't got the nerve.

And so, Martin once again finds himself headed for the medical clinic and another rejuve-shot. Along the way he meets a beautiful blonde woman named Jean, also reporting for another dose of eternal youth. They walk together for a brief time. Somewhere deep within Martin a spark tries to ignite a flame that had long ago flickered and died. When they arrive at the door marked "women", Martin and Jean part company. Watching her disappear beyond the doorway he shrugs in apathy and continues on down the corridor.

Martin is met by a robotic escort. Much to his confusion the robot leads him past the rejuve-shot machines to a private room where he finds a man seated behind a desk. The man explains the situation. "When a member of our society reaches the age of five hundred and fifty, we offer him an opportunity to die... if he wants to, badly enough! ...We have found, in our experiences through the centuries, that people endowed with eternal youth divide into two classes. Those that accept and enjoy it... and those that tire of it and find it, eventually, boring and dull. To the latter, we offer a chance to end the boredom... painlessly!" Martin gladly accepts the offer. The man behind the desk reminds him that there is no backing out once he signs the paperwork, but Martin signs without hesitation. Then, as he is instructed to do, Martin steps into a darkened doorway, into the unknown, where he expects to plunge to his death, or to be blasted to smithereens.

Instead, Martin finds himself in a waiting room. And seated there is Jean, the woman he'd met outside the medical clinic. She, too, has grown desperately bored with living and had accepted the same offer, wishing to end her eternal life.

As the time passes, Martin and Jean discuss the irony of the human condition. "For centuries mankind has striven to attain this perfect goal... eternal youth... and now that we have it... we don't want it!" It is Jean who begins to make the mental leap as she exclaims, "Don't you see? In the old days, life was a challenge. Every day was a battle for survival... Today everything is easy. Look what has happened to love... to marriage..." Martin responds, "I guess you're right. In the old days a man and a woman married and stayed together until death..." And then, Jean finally makes the leap and utters the magic words. "That's because death was always so close. The battle included death. How long did they have... fifty... sixty years? A whole life together... to live in fifty or sixty years? No wonder each moment was so precious. No wonder they fought and savored each minute... loving and enjoying it!"

Only in the face of inevitable death does the woman named Jean finally discover the sweet and simple secret of life. Only then do the eternal man and woman come alive again. Only then do they fall in love. When the man from

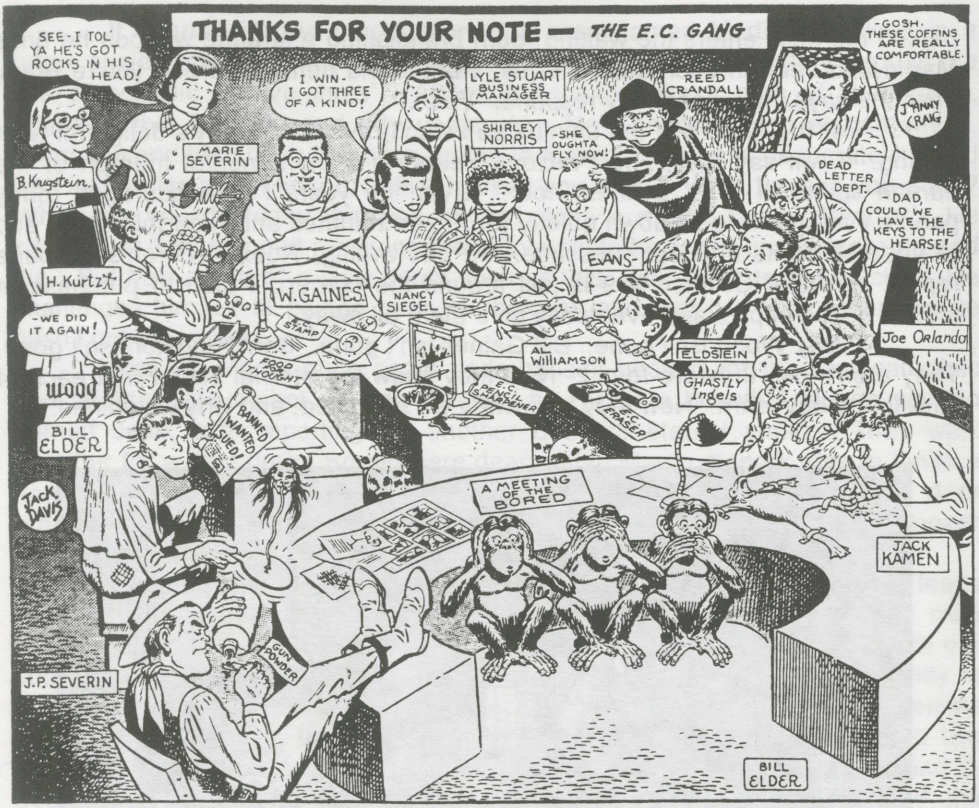
behind the desk enters the waiting room brandishing a strange weapon he finds Martin and Jean in each other's arms, vibrant and defiant. "I see you're ready now!, he says. In unison they respond, "Yes..."

For the benefit of the uninitiated I won't reveal the story's delightful twist ending. I will say that "The Precious Years" is a monumental triumph of the human spirit. It is EC's finest hour. Over the years I've encouraged many people I've known to sit down quietly for fifteen minutes and read this story, and to understand its timeless message. At this writing, Russ Cochran's 32 page reprint of Weird Science #19 is just around the corner. I plan to purchase at least a dozen copies and eventually give them all away.

Wally Wood isn't gone. Bill Gaines isn't gone. Sam Kingston isn't gone. They aren't lost, they are found. Now they know the eternal secret that each of us will one day learn. Now they know why we struggled, and why we shined.



Editor's note: Sam Kingston was a big fan of artist Johnny Craig. Sam and I fell in love with this wonderful oil painting created by Mr. Craig. It is truly a masterpiece. I took this photo last April. It was the last time I would ever see my friend. It captures the Sammy I knew. The man I will always remember. The boy who loved EC Horror Comics.



The illustration above was created by Bill Elder and used as a thank you card for fans who sent in friendly correspondence to the EC office. Elder has captured each EC employee in their own little world. This cartoon allows the viewer to see a fun behind the scenes look into the EC machine. The quote below comes from the hand of EC artist John Severin. It is proof that the drawing above is an accurate depiction of the good old days at 225 Lafayette Street, New York, NY.

"WORKING AT EC WAS, SERIOUS BUSINESS — FRIENDSHIP — HARD WORK — WILD AND CRAZY FUN AND CREATIVE FREEDOM!! FOR ME PERSONALLY, IT ALLOWED ME TO GO FROM ADVENTURE TO HUMOUR TO SCIENCE FICTION.

IT WAS A TIME OF GROWTH FOR ALL THE VARIED TALENTS WHO WERE FORTUNATE TO PARTICIPATE IN A MOST PLEASURABLE AND VALUABLE EXPERIENCE - "

JOHN SEVERIN

MOSTLY ABOUT COLOR

The Artists of EC Comics

by Marie Severin

Some forty years after the EC Comics, my head spins when I thumb through a catalogue like the Kitchen Sink Press and see how the graphics have grown and what's available today. It has leaped forward like the space program, so bear with me as I ramble a bit about the way we was!

I was introduced to the business when my brother suggested I color stories for the EC line. This was about 1952. The stories were sent to Chemical Color in Bridgeport, Connecticut where the black and color plates were made. The art was shot and from the black plates and silver prints were made the same size as the printed page. There they were hand colored and this coloring was used as a guide for the separators who made (by hand) three different sheets for each color in 25%, 50% and 100% tones that were then shot and made into plates with the black plate and sent to the printer. I believe at the time this was Buffalo or Buffalo Press or something. Very primitive compared to today's glorious hues and whizbang airbrush and glitz paper stock. The covers of our comics then, in the 1950's, weren't as classy as some of the future fanzines.

On occasion, when Kelly green suits and yellow cars or just Mickey Mouse type coloring on realistic stories would appear, the EC boys would have a fit. They wanted some control so that the coloring would help tell the story along with the text and art. I'm sure we weren't the only ones who colored their stories, but at the time it was well noticed because I think we really clarified some of the stories. You could see some of the details a little better and things like that. Remember, there were no xerox machines and the copying process was a photostat house that you had to send out to, or the silverprints provided by Chemical Color. Silverprint paper was not the ideal thing to work on, as sometimes chemicals would be left on a page by a fingerprint or something. This would eat up the color! If I made a mistake I had to bleach it out by using that horrible Clorox that smelled and also bleached everything out, the black art as well. I did get some specific reference for some of the Kurtzman war stories, but on the whole the coloring was left to me, but of course it was edited.

Covers were carefully handled. Even the simpler printing processes got some very nice effects. Kurtzman colored his own art, especially on covers, which was good because they really turned out lovely. Some of the other artists sent in color roughs for their covers which was helpful, but most of them left it up to Bill and Al's judgment or Harvey's, or myself. I remember Ingles sent in a couple of cover guides that were gorgeous and really moody, but his watercolors were so muddy that we knew that the separators would never follow them. I really worked on following his style as you couldn't depend on getting a good result by expecting the separators, who really weren't trained artists, to second guess the work. Davis sent in a beautiful rough for a war cover of a close up of a soldier's head, and we used that as is. Most of the guys really had a good color sense. Many comics are colored so beautifully. I thought of playing with Russ Cochran's black and white reprint volumes, just to see how the stories would look.

The EC comics cost ten cents and had four complete stories, four different artists' moods, etc. The readers were satisfied and came back for

more. I'm sure that today one of the six page story plots would be stretched to a mini-series, or a four issue super duper comic book series. But not to criticize. Comics today are making more money than the EC staff ever dreamed of.,

Because the stories were polished and complete in EC, they were very professional and distinct from each other. I believe they added to the growing fan's choice of EC. The horror comics were really easy to see. Artists gave you wonderful lighting and moods. Graham Ingles' work should've had the modern reproductions and some of the weird colors possible today that would have made his stories even more outstanding. He was pretty easy to color and his art was very strong. Even Kamen, who has given stories usually of normal looking people in situations, your average U.S. Citizen, the stories would blow up in the end in some bizarre horrible ending, which worked very well in color. Krigstein was difficult, as I sensed this was artwork left uncolored by the artist and I had to find out what he had in mind. I imagine Kurtzman had been the same way. Science Fiction was great fun and I loved the new concept; Woody with the spaceship interiors and weird wild shots of space. Same with Orlando, similar, but he had his own way and did some great stories. Davis who was into all the books, was versatile and easy to color, as his inking was so powerful. Very much like a Kirby story--hard to ruin.

One thing about working at EC was that you never got bored! No two artists were alike and each one was a challenge. The hardest to color was Woody. In Science Fiction, my mind would see ten ways to approach one panel! He gave you areas for highlights you could color it or take it or leave it. He had marvelous growths--trees and trunks and critters crawling about. In coloring this stuff, you had to consider if it would detract from the story telling. Usually belts, buttons, scarves, jackets and weapons would appear and disappear, and change on every page, so you could be sure that readers would notice throughout the whole story and ask, "Where did the hero's red scarf go?", and "Who's that guy--he doesn't have a red medal on his chest now!" But no matter, he was always good and looked marvelous at EC.

Williamson was delightful in Science Fiction but I had to be careful as his style was delicate and we didn't want to lose anything with heavy color. He put a lot of energy into his work, and his inking was fine and delicate. Boy, could he give in the finished product! It was really nice looking. Johnny Craig could do no wrong. His art was crisp and neat. He was crisp and neat, and did everything well. If only he could have been faster we could have seen much more of his work. He was a very nice fellow. I love the art in "Aces High"; a delight to color and Evans and Severin put you right in the cockpit! Civil war stories were a bit tedious at times, it had to be so accurate. It looked pretty good, but it was a bit too much. Reed Crandall was a real pro and I liked his style, which glowed when it was colored. I only colored Feldstein's covers, which were pure comic art, excellent reproduction and well thought out. Too bad he didn't have time to draw. There was a lot going on inside his head I bet, and he could only share it in writing. He was patient and taught me a lot about comics. I preferred Severin and Elder layouts and storytelling, they added many gags, as we all know. I had to be careful to maintain the story continuity and not lose these side gags. The work took time to color but it was very satisfying and the fans loved it. Last but not least, Severin, (who was the pick of the bunch to me of course); the life and energy of his work was fun to color. The detail and texture gave such reality that his art would and could stand alone.

Besides coloring I did "Girl Friday" tasks and research for Kurtzman. He sent me with a hideous duffel bag filled with books and cameras to the National Guard Armory to photograph a soldier assembling and disassembling a bazooka to be used in a war story. It was not stylish in the 1950's to carry a soldier's duffel bag over your shoulder while wearing a dress and heels. I was forced to be a forerunner of the "everybody carries big stuff" generation.

As you can probably gather, I really enjoyed working there. Harvey was a really shy guy. I don't know what he was like later, I didn't know him that well later. At times he would change into this hysterically funny person when acting out a story. He was once describing to me a H.M. Bateman gag drawing, (an English cartoonist from Punch during the 'twenties). Harvey turned into this drawing. He turned into one of his own drawings and he was absolutely hysterical! It was an amazing transformation. Gloria Steinem worked in later years for Harvey. That must have been interesting.

One thing I learned at EC right at the very beginning of my little comic book career was that although the artist is the stage manager, the actor, the lighting director, and in charge of background and scenery and all of that, without a good story--forget it, and vice-versa.

In the office we had Mr. Lee who was the office manager, a fine gentleman and really the only completely normal person. He was very patient and tolerated us all. John Putnam came with MAD and was a splendid teacher who taught me a lot. By degrees I got to know the artists as they came and went with their stories. We'd have lunches with the gang and all this revolved around one person--Bill Gaines. Bill was a very unusual man. He was intelligent, talented, generous, and thoughtful. I think he realized that this philosophy helped him enjoy life and did he ever.

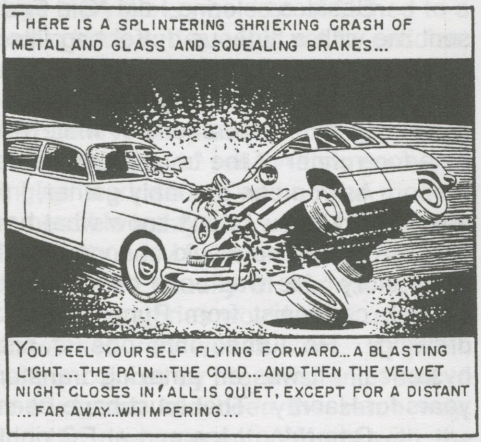
The unfortunate Senate hearings that deflated the industry for so long showed Bill Gaines bravely defending our little comic book industry, which was blamed for the degeneration of our youth. Well, they censored comics, and guess what? We grew up a worse generation than had gone before. Now they can only blame TV, but I think TV can more than defend itself because it has more money and a lot more spokespersons.

Bill was overjoyed when he was given a Horror Hall of Fame award on TV. The EC's are long gone, but have generated a lot of entertainment on TV, and in movies and have inspired people like Spielberg and that type of entertainment. It's really great. He's vindicated his work and his people. Bill is more famous than Kurtzman I guess. I remember how struck I was by his death. On the radio, Imus, whose humor I find very much the same satire and method of madness said, "Well, Bill Gaines died... I liked him!" And so did we all, so did we all.

Marie S.

Editor's note: This article was transcribed from a phone conversation by my good friend John Province. It was previously printed in the COMIC AND FANTASY ART AMATEUR PRESS ASSOCIATION (CFA-APA), #36, 1995, special EC issue.





PICTO-FICTION

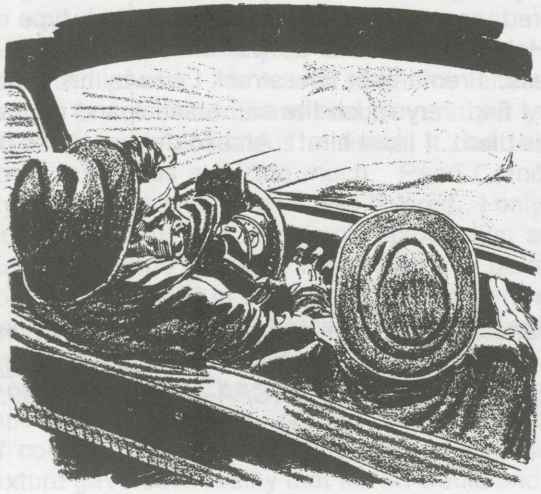
by Bill Leach

An attempt to keep EC in the horror field came in the form of a new PICTO-FICTON magazine titled TERROR ILLUSTRATED. It made its debut on the newsstands in November 1955 and was followed up with a second and final issue in April 1956. Using the same writers and artists seemed like a sure thing, but the success of EC's previous horror comics would never come to this new and unique magazine. If they had used the established titles of their discontinued horror comics, perhaps this PICTO-FICTION title may have survived.

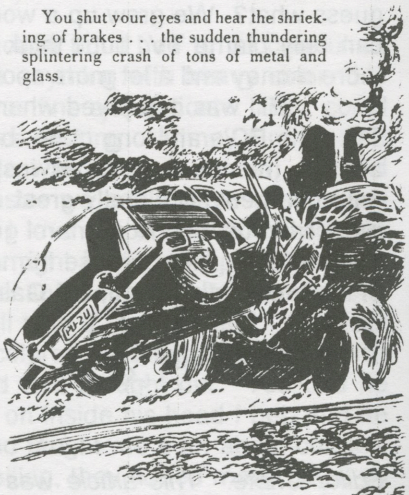
Your head begins to nod. Carl's whistling continues. Flat. Unmelodic. Suddenly he gasps. You look up.

A pair of headlights . . . bright . . . blinding . . . hurtles at you from out of the blackness. You try to scream, but it chokes in your throat, a rattling cough.

"Look out, Mel," Carl shouts. "We're going to hit . . . "



You shut your eyes and hear the shrieking of brakes . . . the sudden thundering splintering crash of tons of metal and glass.



You feel yourself fly forward. There is a blasting light . . . a sudden shooting pain . . . a rush of cold air . . . and then the velvet-black night closes in. All is silent, save for a distant, far-away whimpering.





COMPARISON

The panels above are from the story REFLECTION OF DEATH written and illustrated by Al Feldstein (TFTC #23, 1951). The panels below are from the same story, this time from TERROR ILLUSTRATED, #2. The drawings are by veteran EC artist George Evans and writing credit is given to Alfred E. Nueman. Feldstein would use this pen name whenever he had written more than one story in a publication. When Feldstein took over the editing duties on MAD magazine he used this pen name for the magazines mascot, previously know as the "WHAT ME WORRY" kid.

And then you scream. You open your rotted, torn, decomposed mouth at the sight of your awful reflection in the mirror and you *scream* . . .



And suddenly, Carl is beside you . . . shaking you . . . shaking . . . shaking . . .
"Mel. Mel! *Mel* . . ."





art by Hal Robins

OTR: THE EVIL INFLUENCE BEHIND EC

by Kurt Kuersteiner

They say that those who don't know history are doomed to repeat it. In the case of Gaines and Feldstein, however, a unusual bastardization on this theme occurred. They knew history, and yet they still repeated it. But they were hardly doomed by it. If anything, it was one of the ingredients of their success.

In an interview published in Squa Tront #9, Al Feldstein made several interesting admissions. One of them was on page 5:

"Our plots came from a conglomeration of sources- movies we'd seen, books we'd read... we weren't really intending to steal stuff, we were just looking for inspiration to give us ideas to come up with something original..."

Whether intentional or not, EC took quite a few of their plot lines from other sources. One medium in particular had a dramatic role in forming the very format in which EC comics were told. Old Time Radio (OTR). If one were to search for the inspiration of EC's horror hosts, one need not look any further than the OTR shows of Feldstein and Gaines' youth. Again, in Feldstein's words:

"We had come on to this thing of doing horror and scary stuff. Bill and I had remembered The Witch's Tale and Lights Out from radio- this is all old hat, I know- and we tried it out in the comics..."

Indeed they did. The GhouLunatics were direct descendants from the wicked host of The Witch's Tale. Feldstein admitted as much later on in the same article:

"...when I first came up with the Crypt Keeper and the Vault Keeper, who were direct steals from the witch in The Witch's Tale. I don't remember the witch being as facetious, and with the puns, but she cackled..."

True. EC's Old Witch, Crypt Keeper and Vault Keeper didn't inherit their sick sense of humor from The Witch's Tale. Instead, they got that from Raymond, the host of Inner Sanctum Mysteries. Raymond was famous for morbid puns and evil asides at the beginning, middle, and end of every story. It was a gimmick that made Inner Sanctum one of the most popular and longest running radio series of its time. Fortunately for EC, Raymond's trademark wit wasn't actually trademarked or copyrighted. If it were, EC could have been in BIG trouble.

But there were other ideas that EC borrowed despite their copyright, and on occasion, they were caught. The most famous of these instances were the writings of Ray Bradbury. Again, Feldstein's interview:

"...Oh yeah, not only borrowings in terms of plot, but borrowings in terms of writing style. I was very impressed with Ray Bradbury. I read *Dark Carnival* and *The Martian Chronicles* and *The Illustrated Man*, and whatever else I could get a hold of Bradbury's at the time. I was very impressed with his writing style and tried to emulate it, in the comic style.

We didn't consciously steal from him, you know, but again, we might have been pretty close."

Whether consciously or unconsciously, many of Bradbury's plots showed up with only minor variations in EC comics. These same stories had been dramatized with great success on radio just a few years before they showed up in EC. It is almost inconceivable that Gaines or Feldstein didn't hear some of these stories on the radio at that time. They were classics of the genre. Here are just a few of their uncredited adaptations:

Home To Stay from Weird Fantasy #13 follows the premise of Bradbury's *Kaleidoscope*, telling the story of an astronaut falling through space toward Earth. As he burns up hitting the atmosphere, a little boy sees the flames and wishes upon a falling star. This story was a big hit on Suspense.

Mad Journey from Weird Fantasy #4 is very similar to Bradbury's *The Earthmen*, as heard on Escape! (the summer replacement for Suspense). The big build up leads to the same twist ending, where a stranger is lead to alien scientists who will consider his claim that he is an astronaut from Earth. (The "scientists" turn out to be insane asylum doctors, of course.)

There are other examples of borrowed Bradbury ideas, but it's uncertain how many of them were adapted from radio instead of books. The reason the radio aspect is significant is that it allows more believability to the claim that these rip offs were unintentional. It's easier to forget the source of something you heard than it is to forget something you read. That being said, some of Dimension X stories were remarkably recent, and so many plots were unoriginal that the sheer number of borrowed ideas make the claim that it was all unintentional seem a little- shall we say- bogus?

Regardless, the uncredited Bradbury borrowing came to an end when EC got a letter from Bradbury that he was aware his stories were being adapted. Luckily, instead of suing EC, he simply asked for his royalty check. EC not only sent them, they began giving Bradbury banner credit on the covers of their comics whenever they adapted other stories from the author. Stories like *The Small Assassin* and *The October Game* (Shock SuspenStories #7 and #9) were just two such examples.

But there were other writers whose successful radio plays wound up on the pages of EC without credit.

Take for example the *Horror In The Night* story from Vault of Horror #1. The story is of a real estate broker who dreams about a young couple renting a house, an event that results in a double murder. He tells his buddy about it and they laugh it off, but then the same young couple come walking in through the office door. Originally, this story was broadcast on Suspense as *House on Cypress Canyon*, where it became a classic. It was an identical plot except the agent didn't dream it, he found the story written and hidden in a shoe box at the house where it all occurs. The wife wasn't a vampire either, but she becomes a blood thirsty killer in the radio version nevertheless.

The next story in Vault of Horror #1 was *Terror Train*. This story is very reminiscent of many Inner Sanctum themes. The lady thinks her husband is

trying to kill her, but actually, she is insane and he is trying to stop her. It's all told in the same eerie flashback style that made Inner Sanctum so famous.

Chewed Out is another popular Weird Science story (#12) that was borrowed from radio. In it, an amateur Ham radio operator makes contact with friendly aliens and guides them to a landing on Earth. When they land, their ship is attacked by acid and giant monsters because they are (gasp!) only an inch in size! This plot was originally used on two different series. Once on Suspense as *The Invader* and once on Dimension X as *Pictures Don't Lie.* The only variation was that instead of being eaten in a hot dog (as they were in the EC version), they were drowned in the water from a mud puddle.

At this point, I tried an experiment. I didn't want to read all my EC reprints now, because I've been saving some for a rainy day. Instead, I decided I would scan the last panels of my reprints in search of particular radio plots EC would likely steal. I thought of two popular radio plots that would lend themselves well to the EC style (simple plots with great twist endings). I found them both, and quickly too.

The first one was easy. *Report From A Dead Planet* (from Suspense) would make the perfect EC tale. In it, a crew of astronauts explore a strange, desolate world. They discover this world was destroyed by atomic weapons, and the name of this planet was... was... you guessed it; Earth. This story appeared in the very first volume of Weird Fantasy as *Trip into the Unknown.*

The second one was a little tougher. Perhaps the *War of the Worlds* radio play that caused a nation wide panic in 1939? No, that would be too famous (though they did an interesting variation on it entitled *Sci-Fi Radio Broadcast Causes Panic* in Weird Science #4). I chose instead *Dead Earnest* from Suspense. This had such a good twist ending, that Alfred Hitchcock reused it in his TV series. In it, a paralyzed man is thought to be dead and almost gets an autopsy, but is saved when he sheds a tear. The EC adaptation (Crime SuspenStories #2) was called *The Corpse in the Crematorium.* It's basically the same plot, except it's a bead of sweat that reveals the man is alive just before he's shoved into the crematorium.

All right, so the boys from EC swiped many of their best stories from other sources, what does that prove? Nothing, except that they enjoyed old radio horror in a big way. If it wasn't for OTR, the GhouLunatics might never have existed and EC might never have been so popular. It certainly would have been very different.

If you enjoyed the EC adaptations, you would probably get a kick out of hearing the original broadcasts as well. Any of the above radio shows are still available through most OTR dealers. (I got mine from Radio Showcase at ph# 707-525-0825.) There are many other great horror shows never used by EC that are also available. If you have any and want to trade, or want to swap information on other EC stories that were "borrowed", please contact me. (Leave a message at ph# 904-385-8357 or e-mail KyrtK@aol.com)


SEDUCT THIS!!!
HERE LIES FREDRIC WERTHAM PHD
CECIL SUTTON '96

THE HAUNTED FIFTIES

by Ken Kaffke

Fandom should stop blaming Fredric Wertham for the demise of EC's wonderfully gory horror comics of the '50s.

Oh sure, Wertham's testimony at the Senate Subcommittee's hearing was partly responsible for the creation of the comics code, with his book "Seduction of the Innocent" serving as the heavy artillery. But many parents were probably as influenced by articles appearing in family magazines as by Wertham's clinical study. *(Editor's note: Reader's Digest ran a condensed version of Wertham's book which captured the attention of many concerned Americans).* Back then, middle-class suburbanites were more likely to trust a senator (ala McCarthy) than a liberal-educated psychologist.

Wertham corresponded with EC's original fan-addicts a few years after the comics code went into effect, stating that he had advocated a rating system for comics - including an age restriction for the violent comics - but not outright censorship.

Wertham felt the code did nothing to alter the super hero-style violence that continued to plague the industry. Most comic companies seemed little effected by their own guidelines. Batman and Robin continued swinging suggestively on Batropes together. Wonder Woman held fast to her "lesbian" (Wertham said it!) tendencies. But the code's restrictions on lurid subject matter eventually helped to bury Bill Gaines' EC line of titles.

Gaines attempted to ally himself with his competitors, particularly Archie comics and DC. The attempt backfired for several reasons.

Archie's publishers had never forgiven Gaines for publishing Starchie, a grungy satire created by Bill Elder and Harvey Kurtzman. DC, the company with the most to lose, blamed EC for plummeting sales caused by the hearings controversy. EC's rivals were only too glad to block both approval and distribution of Gaines' four-color books. Not surprisingly, EC's cleaned-up magazines, including Valor, Impact, and Piracy, came back from the newsstands in unopened bundles.

Two companies did continue to publish monster and supernatural comics for years. ACG, or American Comics Group, continued publishing an enjoyable line of supernatural comics, including Forbidden Worlds and Adventures into the Unknown, a book that began in 1948 and was the first continuous horror comic. ACG somehow avoided implementing any title or format changes. Back then it was a lot of fun reading ACG for a few harmless spook thrills.

Then there was Atlas, which eventually acquired the house-name of Marvel around the time of Spiderman's origin. Though their pre-code comics were far from wimpy, they lacked the EC penchant for grand guignol. This helped Atlas' best sellers survive the creation of the code.

Atlas' books usually featured giant-alien stories drawn by Jack Kirby, and beautifully eerie tales spun by Steve Ditko. Some of these pre-Marvel Age tales remain as nightmarish as anything EC ever attempted. In fact some of EC staff, including Al Williamson and Jack Davis, free-lanced for Stan Lee during the late '50s.

Harvey Comics had published some of the more inventive pre-code weird tales, including Colorama by Bob Powell. Harvey went back to publishing

cute li'l devil, ghost, and witch tales, including Casper, Hot Stuff and Wendy the Witch.

Archie Comics eventually put out Tales to Drive you Bats, an amusing title that capitalized on the monster craze of the early '60s. The book got a seal of approval despite the depiction of werewolves and vampires.

Oddly enough, even after the comic industry cleaned up, juvenile delinquency rates climbed higher than ever. Other forms of popular culture came under attack.

Weird and violent TV shows such as Thriller, Way Out, Hitchcock, and The Untouchables, were decried. So too were the kinky cheesecake photos sold in the back pages of pulp magazines by New York's finest smut peddler, Irving Klaw. (His sister Paula still runs the biz, now called Movie Star News.)

The same Senator Estes Kefauver who ran the headline-grabbing hearings on crime/horror comics also held a judiciary committee attacking pornography. Betty Page herself was questioned at these hearings in the late '50s. She disappeared from the figure-modeling mags soon afterward.

More than half a decade of blacklisting, of intimidation, and of blue-nosing had finally created a real Haunt of Fear.



Artist, musician, collector and good friend Cyril Jordan was ghoulish enough to create an image of the Old Witch. It looks like she is preparing another evil brew for us to enjoy.



If you are looking for a unique collector's item you should definitely check out the special editions of ***TALES FROM THE CRYPT-THE OFFICIAL ARCHIVES.*** Bruce Hamilton has done it again! This time he has collected the autographs of Feldstein, Davis, Williamson, Orlando, Craig, Evans, Marie Severin and the legendary "Harvey Kurtzman". There are three different editions and supplies are extremely limited. For more information call: Hamilton Comics: (520) 776-1300.

Grant Geissman is also working on another EC related project. He has combined his efforts with Fred von Bernewitz and is revamping a new and improved ***EC CHECKLIST***. This book will be lavishly illustrated with cover art and other special surprises. Kitchen Sink is publishing this *MUST HAVE* item later this year.





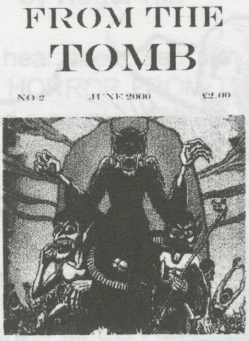
This fantastic pencil drawing was created by the hand of XNO. Those of you who are seeing his work for the first time should be warned that the image above is one of his more tame pieces. XNO is truly the "KING OF THE MONSTER MAKERS". He works mostly in acrylic on canvas and his art is not for the squimish or closed minded.



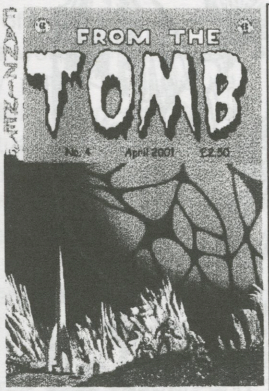
witchcraft mayhem from Richard Corben's *TALES FROM THE PLAGUE*

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GHASTLY

THE RETURN OF GRAHAM INGELS

by Roger Hill

I was very saddened to hear about Sam Kingston who, over the past two years, produced seven issues of HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR. During that time period Sam and I passed a couple of letters back and forth and I promised him to eventually contribute something worth reading to his little "muck mag". That time for contribution is long overdue, and is about to be presented to you EC Fan-Addicts here and now. As to whether or not it is worth reading...I'll leave that up to you. I dedicate this article to Sam Kingston - an EC Fan-Addict of the third generation.

Since the mid to late sixties when the resurgence of EC comic collecting fever was at an all time high, many of us EC Fan-Addicts were already beginning to show an interest in knowing more about the EC artists themselves. In those days most of the EC gang were still very active in the comics field, in one form or another. There were only three EC artists at that time who had, for the most part, dropped totally out of the picture. They were Graham Ingels, Jack Kamen and Berni Krigstein. An update on Krigstein's involvement in the field of fine arts was eventually published by John Benson in SQUA TRONT No. 6. Kamen, who basically left the comics field after leaving EC, got into the advertising market. An in-depth interview with Kamen will eventually be published by long-time EC historian Bill Spicer.

Graham Ingels was the only EC artist who became somewhat of an elusive mystery man since his untimely disappearance and relocation to Florida in the late 1950's. For over thirty years the rumors of Ingel's disenchantment with the comic book business, and subsequent self-imposed exile from organized Fandom, had become widely known and, for the most part, accepted by his many fans. There wasn't a whole lot anybody could do about it because none of us were privy to Ingel's Florida address. Even Bill Gaines did not know for many years where Graham Ingels was living, or if he was still alive.

During that time only one written communication had ever been received from Ingels, containing tangible evidence that the rumors were indeed true. That communication was in the form of a letter sent to MAD publisher Bill Gaines in 1978. Gaines at the time had been serving as an intermediate liaison between a small group of EC fans and Mr. Ingels. This group of EC fans, headed up by GRAPHIC STORY MAGAZINE publisher - Bill Spicer, wanted to visit Graham Ingels at his home in Lantana, Florida, to conduct an interview with him about his career. The following letter, dated January 12, 1978, was presented in Spicer's FANFARE No. 4, published in the Summer of 1981.

Dear Bill:

I really appreciate your consideration. I'm not a total recluse but avoid public contact as much as possible, particularly relating to the past.

My work these days requires a certain amount of publicity & promotion beneficial mainly to other interests. Obviously I have many good reasons to constantly discourage the image making attempts of well intentional followers.

I am here during the winter months only, so their projected visit would be pointless. Even so, I would regard the intrusion with great hostility, and believe me it would avail them nothing. This guy Spicer comes on strong in a crude fashion & he does not have my address. My attorney handles all.

I will be most grateful if you block any further inquiry and appreciate so much your concern and the trouble you've taken.

Best wishes and happiness, thanks,

Graham

Regards to the old gang! I have many gratifying thoughts of our relationship, Bill, and your graciousness at Christmas time.

As many of us concluded from that letter, Graham wanted no part of being visited by fans, especially in regards to the past. During the 1980's Bill Gaines had reported to EC fans that Ingels taught classes in watercolor and oil painting, and as we later learned, he was also doing full-scale oil paintings for sale through a St. Petersburg, Florida art gallery. He had also produced several large murals for a bank, depicting scenes of historical Florida. From the little P.S. that Graham added at the end of this letter, we could see that he had good memories of Bill and the old gang. But even so, there seemed little chance of Graham Ingels ever coming back to our world of art, let alone ever getting an interview with him. The master horror illustrator of EC comics (most probably the greatest artist who even drew horror stories for the comics) had spoken his piece and I know most of us respected Graham's right to privacy.

And so it remained until that fateful day, April 27, 1989, when a phone call came into the offices of Russ Cochran - EC Comics reprint publisher - in West Plains, Missouri. Angie, Russ' secretary and gal Friday, answered the call. She put the caller on hold and gave a yell to Russ Cochran. "Russ, there's a Mr. Ingels on the phone who would like to speak with you." Russ, hearing this, immediately thought to himself, "sure, ha, it's probably Bill Spicer or Roger Hill playing a little joke on me." Russ then proceeded to pick up the phone and said, "Hi Ghastly, how's it going?" With a deep smooth baritone voice, the reply on the other end came back, "Hello...this is Graham Ingels calling".

After a few quick words of apology for having answered the phone so haphazardly, Russ explained that after so many years of trying to get a response from Mr. Ingels, and most of Russ' friends knowing this, he had assumed someone was having a little fun with him when the call came in. Graham proceeded to inform Russ that he had already called Bill Gaines earlier in the day to "check out Russ Cochran". It turns out that Russ had written a letter to Graham a month or so earlier, suggesting the idea of having him do some paintings dealing with different themes of horror, that Russ would then be able to put up in his EC original art auctions. Graham also indicated that he was not all that excited about doing horror again and said he'd prefer not putting the Old Witch character into any of the paintings. After a lengthy conversation, Russ finally convinced him that it would be a good idea to include her in the first few paintings. Russ also estimated that each piece would probably fetch as much as $5,000 to $10,000 in auction.

Graham finally agreed to do a painting, which he said would probably measure 24x30 or even 30x40 in size. He also let Russ know in no uncertain terms that he expected to maintain a certain amount of creative freedom over each painting, if he continued doing them. He also mentioned that he didn't go by the "GHASTLY" name anymore and all paintings would be signed Graham Ingels. There was also some discussion of doing limited edition, signed prints of the paintings, and Graham was receptive to the idea. The conversation ended with an agreement that Graham would work-up a color rough of an idea and send it to Russ. Then they would discuss it further during their next phone conversation.

Russ called me that evening of April 27 to inform me of these developments, which of course I was very happy to hear. He also informed me that he had asked Graham if he would be willing to eventually answer some questions about his work and career. Graham had agreed to that, but quickly added that only if the questions did not hit on certain aspects of his personal life. Russ had already called and informed Bill Spicer of this news and had asked Bill to put together a list of questions that he would want included in an interview, if and when the chance came. Russ asked me to do the same, which I also agreed to. I asked Russ, when the time came to go to Florida to conduct the interview, would it be possible for me to accompany him and help out on the project. I reminded him that I had an extensive collection of Ingels' published work, before and after EC, which would be useful for such an occasion. The idea sounded ok with him, but he said he wasn't going to rush Graham into it right away. Russ' impression was that Ingels was a little apprehensive about the whole thing, and didn't want to pressure him for fear of loosing the whole deal.

On May 30th, I called Russ again to find out what had developed so far on the color rough from Ingels. I was surprised to learn that he had received not only one, but three color roughs from Ingels just a few days earlier, and indicated there were some problems with them that hopefully could be worked out before the final painting was completed. It turned out that Ingels had called Russ back a week after the first phone call in April and had told him that even though he was going ahead with the paintings, he had decided he didn't want any publicity or interviews until after that first painting sold at auction. As far as the Old Witch was concerned, Graham had told Russ he didn't want to paint her shroud or clothing in red, but instead use a brown or beige color. During the fifties, the Old Witch's bulging eyeball was always on her right. Apparently Graham had now decided to alternate the bulging eye from right to left. Ingels also said he really didn't want to include any of those nasty little creatures that he used to conjure up during the EC days. Russ told him he was famous for doing those sort of characters, but Ingels was adamant about it and there was no changing his mind at the time. Russ told me that Graham was pretty touchy when it came to suggestions about his artwork, and said discussing these things with Ingels was like walking on eggshells. He had to be careful about any suggestions he made.

I asked Russ if we could finalize a date for my visit to West Plains to look through some of the EC art which was slated for an auction on July 10 and 11. At the same time, I could look at the Ingels color roughs and discuss some of the problems with Russ. I hoped to give him some helpful input. We set up the visit for the following Friday, June 2. Russ said that he was supposed to have called Graham after receiving the color roughs, but had put it off until he had more time to study the art and plan what he was going to say to him. I could tell Russ was somewhat nervous about calling Ingels. Russ told me he might even call Graham while I was there on Friday, after we had a chance to discuss the roughs. Needless to say, I was all for that idea.

It was another hot Summer day as my old '76 Chevy Impala rolled into the quiet little town of West Plains, located in the southern part of Missouri. Throughout the entire drive, visions of Ingels paintings had been spinning through my mind. I was about to see something that I thought would never happen. The return of Graham Ingels! Within minutes I was going to see new paintings of the Old Witch, created by the original artist who had made her famous during the fifties. Ingels was at this time 74 years old. The timing of this was pretty incredible too. Russ Cochran



This rough painting by Graham Ingels measures 11"x 14". It shows that even after years of ignoring his career in horror comics, he was still capable of creating the GHASTLY images that his fans craved.

had just completed auctioning off all of the EC New Trend art and things were beginning to settle down when Ingels contacted him. I knew these paintings would create some new excitement for the auctions. But, above all else, the real excitement for me, and many other fans, was the simple fact that the greatest horror artist of all time had resurfaced. He wasn't allowing any interviews yet, but at least he'd taken the first step and agreed to create some paintings.

Russ greeted me in his usual friendly manner and after a quick lunch, we proceeded to his office to look over the Ingels roughs. Russ pulled the originals from a shelf and held them up one by one. It was a moment of hyper-ventilation I shall never forget. I just couldn't get over the fact that I was looking at brand new horror imagery created by Graham Ingels. In each piece, there she was, the Old Witch herself, staring back at me with that bulging eyeball, looking like she had just stepped right out of the fifties. Even though the Old Witch's cloak was beige colored, I thought the roughs looked very good. Graham had painted them using perhaps too rich a palette. Russ and I both realized that Ingels would have to ease back into it. The question was whether or not Russ could help guide Graham in the right direction concerning the content material for the new painting. Nothing had been finalized yet on what the final completed painting would depict.

So Russ and I sat there in his office for the next hour and half discussing many different aspects of the roughs, of Ingles doing paintings, and the possibility of limited edition prints of those paintings. While we talked, Russ made a few notes on a pad of paper, things he wanted to discuss with Ingels during the next phone conversation. Russ had decided to call Graham with me sitting there, and as long as I kept very quiet, he would let me listen in on the conversation. Naturally I was very excited about that and I had my notepad in hand, ready to write. I wanted to capture as much of this conversation as I could for posterity. Suddenly, the phone rang. Russ' secretary, Angie, intercepted the call as usual. The next thing I heard was Angie's voice saying, "Russ, Graham Ingels is on line one for you"! I looked at Russ, he looked at me and said...."Well Rog', looks like we're going to talk to him right now". I quickly asked Russ to put Ingels on the squawk box speaker located on top of his desk. He hit a button, leaned forward and said "Hello Graham". A voice came back through the intercom speaker, "Hi Russ, just thought I'd call and see if you received the color roughs ok in the mail".

Over the next two years, Graham Ingels would complete ten color roughs and four larger, finished, Old Witch paintings for Cochran's auctions. The color roughs always started out with a minimum bid of $1,000, and sold for as much as $2,100. The four finished paintings had a reserve of $5,000 each, and the highest price realized on any one painting was $7,500. Unfortunately, in late March 1991, Ingels entered a Florida hospital complaining of stomach pains that were diagnosed shortly thereafter as cancer. He died a few days later on April 4, at the age of 75.

Here now for the Horrorstorical record we present all fourteen Old Witch paintings that Graham Ingels produced during his short comeback. They are in my opinion very good. I love them all. Some are better than others, and of course it all comes down to personal preference as to which ones are your favorites. One thing for sure, the paintings represent a final look into the mind and talent of a great artist. An artist who left his mark in the annals of comics history, and whom many of us refer to as the Master of Horror. Graham Ingels' legacy lives on in his work.

THE ROUGH PAINTINGS

by Graham Ingels



14" x 10"



14" x 10"



16" x 11"



14" x 10"



14" x 10"

The Rough Paintings by Graham Ingels





11" x 14"



14" x 11"



10" x 14"

The Rough Paintings by Graham Ingels



10" x 14"

THE FINISHED PAINTINGS



20" x 30"



21" x 28"



22" x 28"



20" x 30"

by

Graham Ingels

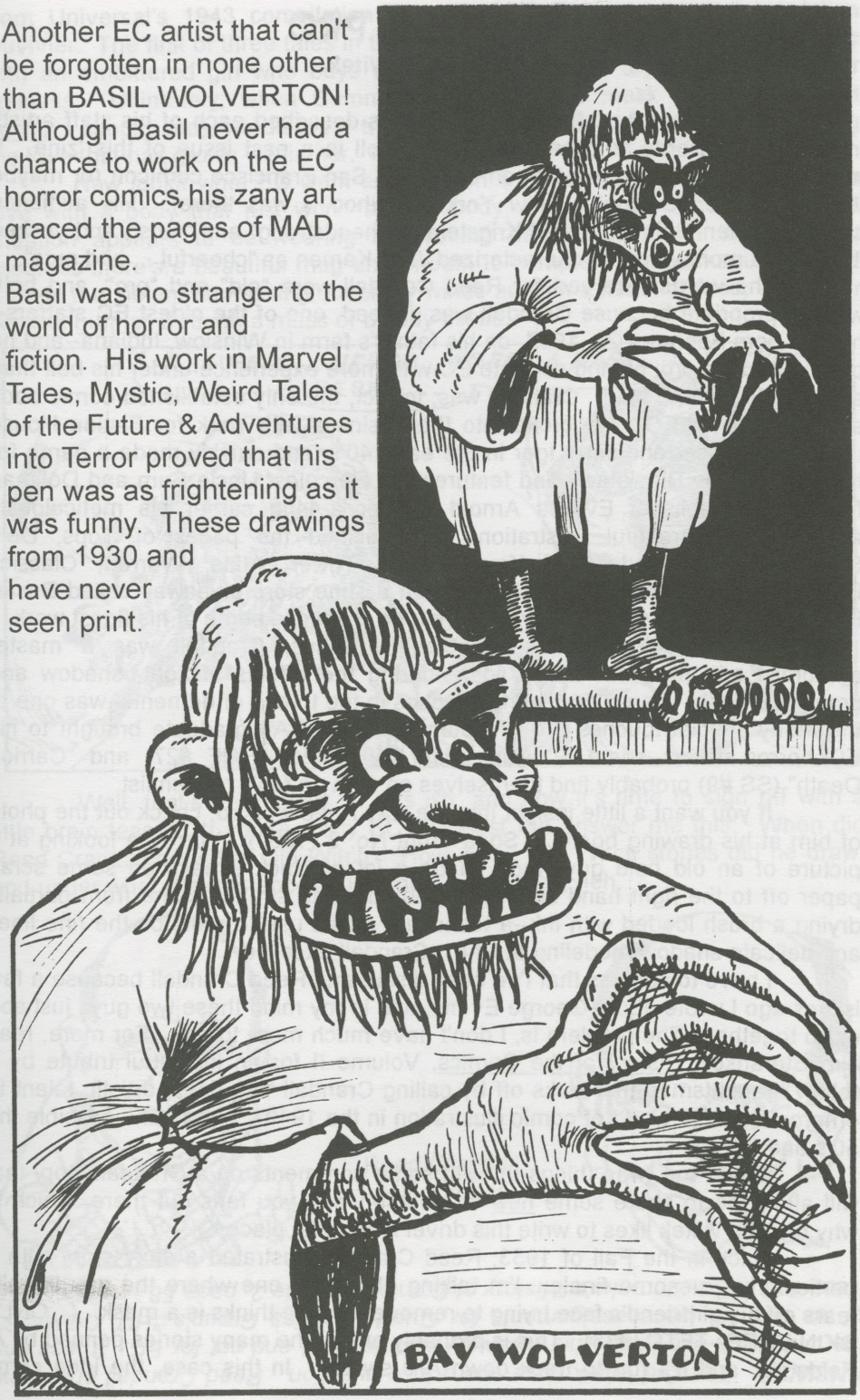
TALES FROM THE LYNCH



Underground cartoonist Jay Lynch captured the moment when his characters Nard and Pat came face to face with the three Ghoulunatics.

Another EC artist that can't be forgotten in none other than BASIL WOLVERTON! Although Basil never had a chance to work on the EC horror comics, his zany art graced the pages of MAD magazine.

Basil was no stranger to the world of horror and fiction. His work in Marvel Tales, Mystic, Weird Tales of the Future & Adventures into Terror proved that his pen was as frightening as it was funny. These drawings from 1930 and have never seen print.



THE OLD PRO

By The Old Witek

I remember the afternoon Bill Gaines described each of his staff artists in two choice words as preserved by Mr. Voll in a past issue of this 'zine. If memory serves, it happened at an early 70's San Francisco comicon (or maybe it was the 72 EC Con in New York. Anyhoo, I was there). His audience chuckled when Gaines labeled Krigstein as "headstrong" and "nuts", and yucked it up some more when he characterized Jack Kamen as "cheerful ... and nuts".

The words reserved for Reed Crandall were "old" and "pro", and both were appropriate because Crandall was, indeed, one of the oldest EC staffers--he was born February 22, 1917, on his father's farm in Winslow, Indiana--and he certainly was a pro, having come to EC with more experience under his belt than anyone else on the staff. Crandall was, in fact, the only established comic book star to work for EC. He broke into the business with work for Fiction House under Will Eisner and Jerry Iger in the early 40's, and quickly made a name for himself drawing Blackhawk and features like Hercules, Uncle Sam and Dollman for Quality publisher Everett Arnold. Over a long career his meticulously accurate and graceful illustrations distinguished the pages of Tops, Dell, Standard, Biro-Wood, Gold Key, Marvel, Tower, Atlas, Warren, Classics Illustrated, Treasure Chest, and yes, even a shoe store giveaway called Buster Brown Comics for which, believe it or not, he produced some of his finest work.

Like his close colleague, George Evans, Crandall was a master anatomist and his work excels in rendering the effects of light, shadow and gravity on flesh. Depicting leering psychos in the throes of dementia was one of the many special touches the Cleveland School of Art graduate brought to his EC horror stories--some of which, like "Swamped" (HOF #27) and "Carrion Death" (SS #9) probably find themselves on many a fan's top ten list.

If you want a little insight into the way Reed worked, check out the photo of him at his drawing board in Squa Tront No. 3 (1969). You'll be looking at a picture of an old bald guy who's made a lot of black streaks on some scrap paper off to the right hand side of the board. The streaks come from partially drying a brush loaded with ink--a technique artists use to produce the fine lines and delicate shadow modeling at which Crandall excelled.

I have to confess that I've been discussing Reed Crandall because a few issues ago I wrote about George Evans, and in my mind these two guys just sort of go together. The problem is, I don't have much more to say. For more, read Jim Steranko's History of the Comics, Volume II for an insightful tribute by a fellow draughtsman that kicks off by calling Crandall "the finest artistic talent to emerge from the world of comic illustration in the 1940's. And quite possible the 50's and 60's".

So let me wrap things up with some comments on a Crandall story that will allow me to share some new information with you fans out there, which is why the Old Witek likes to write this drivel in the first place.

Back in the Fall of 1953, Reed Crandall illustrated a sexy story with a particularly gruesome finale. I'm talking about the one where the guy literally tears off his girlfriend's face trying to remove what he thinks is a mask. (...ONLY SKIN DEEP--TFTC, #38). This is probably one of the many stories penned by Al Feldstein, and it's fun to track down Al's swipes. In this case, the idea came

from Universal's 1943 compilation film, Flesh & Fantasy directed by Julien Duvivier. The first of three tales in the movie features Robert Cummings in love with an embittered girl who buys a mask in a strange toy shop to hide her ugliness. Ultimately, when Cummings removes the mask (and removes it gently, I should add), we discover that her face has become beautiful, reflecting the love that has grown within her. Nice.

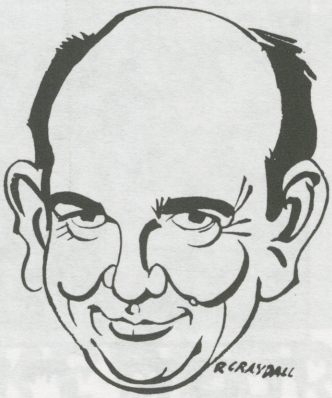
Now lookit what EC went and did. In Crandall's story, the hero falls in love with a body that just won't stop--a body, not a face. The face in this situation appears to be wearing a revolting hag's mask, and the guy just assumes there's a beautiful mug underneath to complete the package. Wrong! Comes the violent unmasking, loverboy winds up with a fistful of face, whilst our heroine gurgles through a mass of bloody tissue:



Well, that's my factoid for this ish, and now it's time to sign off with a little brain teaser. If you're really EC's biggest fan answer me this: When did Reed Crandall draw the Old Witch? How many Old Witch stories did he draw, and under what circumstances? Bye now... heh, heh, heh.



Reed Crandall
self portraits



ANSWER: *The Old Witek gave you a trick question. Reed Crandall only drew the Old Witch one time. This was way back in 1941 and not for EC. It was one of his first freelance assignments for Quality Comics Group's "HIT COMICS", issue #10. See Steranko's "History of Comics" Volume 2, page 58.*

GHOULUNATIC GALLERY



THE CRYPT KEEPER

By Johnny Craig

From The Collection of John & Doris Kelly

GHOULUNATIC GALLERY



THE VAULT KEEPER

By Johnny Craig

From The Collection of John & Doris Kelly

GHOULUNATIC GALLERY

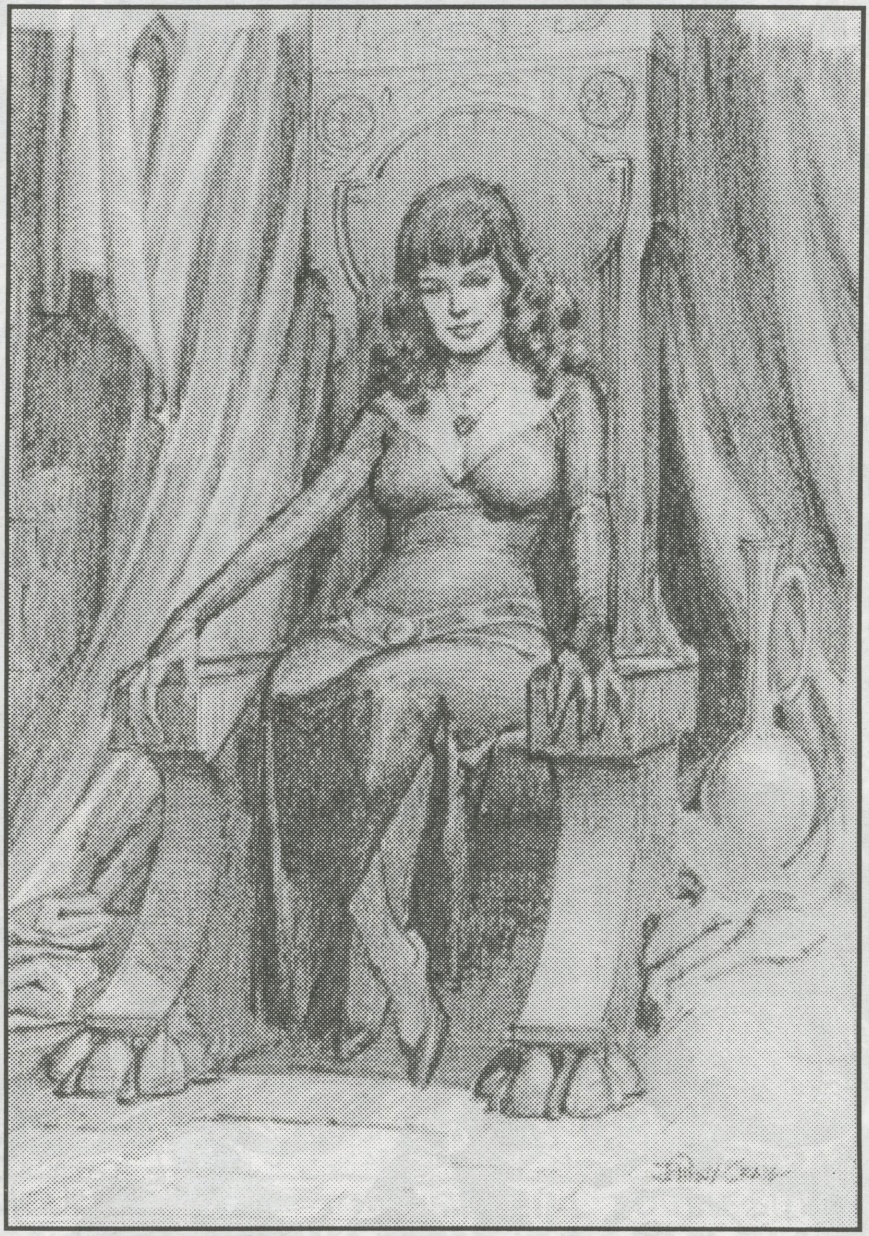


THE OLD WITCH

By Johnny Craig

From The Collection of John & Doris Kelly

GHOULUNATIC GALLERY



DRUSILLA

By Johnny Craig

From The Collection of Bill Leach



Brandon McKinney's Crypt Keeper



Chance Fiveash's version of Drusilla



Alternative artist BOB X allowed the Ghoulunatics to "meat" his character POD.

GROWING UP WITH EC

by Sig Case

In a letter dated 20 November 1995, Sam Kingston wrote "it must've been a treat to grow up in an era almost entirely devoid of computers and filled with ECs!!! They're so obscure now, even with the reprints. The TV series has helped people put EC in more limelight (#7 due out in January features a Mike Voburg cover, he does the comic covers for the TV series, and we also feature an interview from Mike) but the true heart is the 50s era when they were produced".



the first Crypt-Keeper

Well, okay ... if there is a God of Lost Causes, they must be trading some awfully good stories.

My reply was even longer than his letter and went something like this.

"Sam, the EC era was like no era before or after. Yes, there were precedents. I have a few *Weird Tales* from the pre-EC era, and yes Mr. Feldstein and Mr. Gaines cribbed shamelessly from *The Old Witch* of radio fame, classical horror authors, and contemporary storytellers, but the warp and woof of the EC world came from that same mystical and ephemeral world that produced *Le Morte d'Arthur* or *Pogo*.

Who can explain such things? Even the estimable Dr. Wertham was eventually won over by the relentless appeal of EC. Sure, we can listen to Mr. Feldstein tell the truth about the gritty reality of 'fifties comic book publishing and decide to write the whole EC phenomena off like some formula term paper for Psych 101.

And Sam, would it really be better if EC were less obscure? Picture an alternative world where the Comics Code never happened. *Tales from the Crypt* is now a mass circulation comic book, there are cross-over stories with the X-Men, the Crypt-Keeper is battling the Forces of Evil with Judge Dredd, and the current editors condescendingly publish old stories in promotional packages with thinly veiled contempt for us old Fan-Addicts.

But to address your comment directly Sam, the world wasn't exactly awash in ECs. Back issues were available only by tedious trading and slock-shop schlepping. Curent issues even presented difficulties, the anti-comics crowd had been making inroads since the late nineteen-forties and many small town newsies treated ECs the same as, say, *Sunshine* (a nudist magazine) - perfectly legal but not quite nice.

As for the slock-shops, imagine finding, say, five ECs in a secondhand store. Two have the top half of the cover cut off (criminal!), one looks like it's been through the laundry, and one has been scribbled over in crayon. The last one has peanut butter smears on it - now what do you do? Buy them all (did I mention I was poor?) or take the best ones and head down the street to another second hand store where, you hope, a treasure trove of pristine ECs awaits?

Sam, keep in mind that when the last *Tales from the Crypt* was on the stands in February of 1955 I was only twelve years old - I did almost all my EC collecting retroactively - and Mr. Feldstein was only thirty! *Piracy* number two shared the stands with the last *Crypt*. *Haunt* and *Vaults'* last issue was in November of the year before, and the last *Frontline* was in December 1954.

Think of it! When the last *Tales* was on the stands, the first transistor radio had been sold only five months before. The Warsaw Pact was three months into the future, and Mad still had three issues to go as a comic book!

You say you feel that perhaps you "read EC in a past life", that you "have the weirdest feeling for these comics". Before EC, the grandest comic artist I knew of was Alex Raymond (*Flash Gordon*), which styles I saw reprised in Al Williamsons' and Frank Frazettas' EC work. As I mentioned, there were EC-like works that predated EC. We Ray Bradbury fans saw 'twist endings' coming in many EC stories long before we reached page seven.

All that said, there was - and is - something in EC comics that a select few recognize instantly. Even after the example had been set, nothing else could come close. The sustained quality is just part of it, a mystique was there. Sometimes I think that the old EC gang released it rather than created it, as if they couldn't help themselves.

I believe that EC was cut short just this side of its greatest achievements. Had there been no Code, and had they made the fifteen-cent price stick, EC would have further revolutionized the comic book genre with new titles and dazzling upgrades of its old titles. Mr. Gaines had already made the format respectable for creative people - and almost formidable as a medium; Mr. Feldstein had some terrific marketing and organizational ideas, and both men were aware of their audiences' generational migration.

But these are things we can't know, whereas *Horror from the Crypt of Fear* and its antecedents are ample testimony to the EC we do know.



Illustrations © William M. Gaines, Agent

the last Crypt-Keeper

MY CRYPT VIDEO GUIDE & EC INSPIRED SWIPES

by Eric Predoehl

When I found out that Sam Kingston had decided to end his life, I was deeply saddened. My friend Ken Kaffke had first introduced me to this fanzine and actually encouraged Sam to send me a free copy, which I never acknowledged. I always meant to send Sam a letter thanking him for the 'zine, but I never got around to it. I figured that I would thank him in person, as he kept appearing in the San Francisco area visiting his friend Bill Leach. I really appreciated the sincerity Sam used when assembling HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR. He loved compiling EC information and getting it out to all of the EC Fan Addicts. How many other EC fanzines have had the seal of approval from the Gaines estate? For this alone, Sam Kingston must be acknowledged. I hope that he is in a happier place...even if it is not among the living.

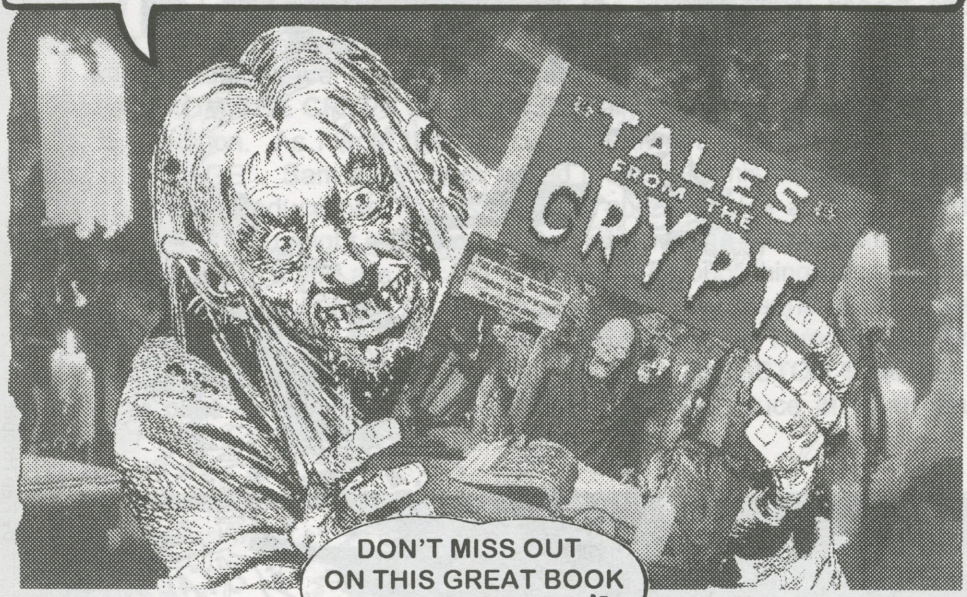
Shortly after HBO started producing the CRYPT series, I decided to compile a video guide. I did this for my own pleasure. At the time there was nothing like it. I created a database, using my computer to cross-reference the HBO adaptations with the original comic books. Being a connoisseur of fine pop culture I wanted to keep track of the writers, directors, actors, and musicians involved in the production of this series. I thought about expanding on the concept, maybe even trying to get someone to publish it. But that won't be necessary now, as there is a new book available which includes a complete filmography of the HBO series. The book, TALES FROM THE CRYPT, THE OFFICIAL ARCHIVE is a massive hardbound coffee table book that includes many articles and illustrations that EC fans will obviously drool over. It also mentions Sam Kingston on two different pages

EC comics have influenced many artists. Fine art, commercial art, as well as comic art have all been affected by the legend and imagery of EC Comics. But the epidemic doesn't stop there...the music industry has also seen its fair share of EC inspired swipes. Many a garage band has swiped an occasional EC cover to use on their self produced albums and flyer designs. Screeching Weasel recently released an album with an EC inspired cover. Other bands, such as the Cramps, have also acknowledged the great work created by the EC gang. Estrus Records is producing some great slabs of vinyl these days, complete with covers that are obviously inspired by EC comics. The record featured below has a great cover and includes a charming mini-comic. I would love to see a comprehensive list of EC inspired swipes. Hopefully someone will compile one soon.



HEY KIDDIES, CHECK OUT THE GOODIES IN MY NEW BOOK:

Over 1000 color and black and white illustrations and photographs;
Four complete stories by Davis, Feldstein, Ingels and Kamen;
Brief biographies and artists' profiles of key illustrators and writers;
All 105 EC Horror Comic Book covers reproduced in "unliving" color;
A bibliography of the Crypt Keeper and a history of EC Horror comics;
A pictorial "filmography" of HBO's TALES FROM THE CRYPT series.
A previously UNPUBLISHED picto-fiction story drawn by Jack Davis;
A Collectibles section highlighting the ghoulest "CRYPT" merchandise





Digby Diehl, author of ***TALES FROM THE CRYPT, THE OFFICIAL ARCHIVES*** sent us a copy of his book...take the Old Witch's advice!



MIDNIGHT AT THE EC GRAVEYARD

by Ken Hooper

THE LAST PAGE?

Can you believe it? You made it through the entire issue! I hope you enjoyed reading this fanzine as much as I enjoyed assembling and publishing it. Many people need to be thanked for their help, support and interest. I would like to thank EVERYONE who became involved: artists, writers, Fan-Addicts, friends and family. My beautiful wife, Tamara, was kind enough to help out in many ways. In order to keep this issue consistent, I decided to retype most of the articles. I would probably still be hunched over my computer if my wife hadn't stepped in with her lightening fast fingers and taken over the task.

Many people have contacted me and inquired about the future of **HORROR FROM THE CRYPT OF FEAR**. Initially this issue was destined to be the final edition. As I write this last page, I am not sure if it will truly be "THE LAST PAGE". Sam's last letter asked me to fulfill his obligation to the subscribers and produce two final issues (#8 and #9). He also made the observation that, "you might even want to continue printing future issues".

Well I am willing if you are...I can't afford to keep publishing this 'zine for free, so that means a request for subscription $$$. My plan is to print one issue each year. Sam's favorite day was Halloween, he loved to put on ghoulish make-up and go out to parties. In **SAM KINGSTON'S** honor, I propose to print a new issue every October. I can produce it! Can you support it? It is up to you now...

